

All the World Loves a Lover: Monarchy, Mass Media, and the 1934 Royal Wedding of Prince George and Princess Marina

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A *family* on the throne is an interesting idea also. It brings down the pride of sovereignty to the level of petty life. No feeling could seem more childish than the enthusiasm of the English at the marriage of the Prince of Wales. They treated as a great political event, what, looked at as a matter of pure business, was very small indeed. But no feeling could be more like common human nature, as it is, and as it is likely to be. The women – one half the human race at least – care fifty times more for a marriage than a ministry. All but a few cynics like to see a pretty novel touching for a moment the dry scenes of the grave world. A princely marriage is the brilliant edition of a universal fact, and, as such, it rivets mankind.¹

W. Bagehot, *The English Constitution* (London, 1867), pp.62-3.

Walter Bagehot believed that royal weddings encouraged public identification with the monarchy and adherence to the political system over which it presided in the mid-nineteenth century. He published his treatise on the nature of government, *The English Constitution*, four years after the 1863 marriage of Edward, Prince of Wales, to Princess Alexandra of Denmark. British newspapers had celebrated the wedding, and that of the Princess Royal to Prussian Prince Friedrich Wilhelm in 1858, as events of national significance.² In 1858 the *Daily News* reported that Queen Victoria's daughter's marriage had been 'ratified by the joyful acclamations of thirty millions of brave and loyal people', and in 1863 *The Times* stated that 'no generation of the British-born race ha[d] ever witnessed or taken part in such a rejoicing' as that which attended the Prince of Wales's nuptials.³ The press's descriptions of public fervour were, however, grossly exaggerated. Neither wedding was acclaimed by a 'national' citizenry. Both pre-dated the popularisation of royal spectacle in the late nineteenth century which elevated the monarchy's symbolic role at a time when its political powers were waning.⁴ Equally, the London and provincial press systems which reported the weddings were small in comparison with the network of national daily newspapers that formed in the 1880s and 1890s and helped transform the royal jubilees, funerals, and coronations of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods into significant state occasions.⁵

Bagehot was thus ahead of his time in his conception of a national 'family monarchy'. The idea that royal weddings formed part of the 'dignified' trappings of the constitution – the 'theatrical show of society' which worked to engender public deference to a complex political hierarchy – was based

¹ Bagehot's italics.

² D. Schönplugg, 'Heirs Before the Altar: Hohenzollern Marriages in a Bourgeois Age', in F. L. Müller and H. Mehrkens, eds., *Sons and Heirs: Succession and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Basingstoke, 2016), pp.61-4; J. Plunkett, *Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch* (Oxford, 2003), pp.53-55.

³ *Daily News*, 26 Jan. 1858, p.3; *The Times*, 11 Mar. 1863, p.8.

⁴ D. Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: the British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c.1820-1977', in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), p.151; J. Wolffe, *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion, and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Oxford, 2000), pp.221-58.

⁵ M. Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain* (Chicago, IL, 2004), p.28; Cannadine, 'The Context', pp.122-25; J. Wolffe, 'The People's King: The Crowd and the Media at the Funeral of Edward VII, May 1910', *Court Historian*, viii (2003), pp.23-30.

on his awareness of developments yet to fully come to fruition.⁶ Since the late eighteenth century European royal families had sought to ‘domesticate’ their images, exposing their home lives to public view through new kinds of media, in order to appeal to particular social groups within their nations.⁷ This article argues that the 1930s heralded a new, crucial phase in the ‘domestication of majesty’ in modern Britain. With the emergence of a twentieth-century *mass* media system, which incorporated radio, newsreels, and the photographic press, the House of Windsor assumed its modern, ubiquitous presence as a *truly* national symbol which connected a mass public to the institutions of state. I focus on the little-known 1934 royal wedding of Prince George – duke of Kent and youngest surviving son of George V – to the famously glamorous Princess Marina of Greece to argue that the media projected this event on a scale, and in ways, never seen before.⁸ More than on any previous occasion it was a royal event driven by publicity, intimacy, and a coterie of courtiers, clerics, and newsmen who were committed to elevating a ‘family monarchy’ as the emotional centre-point of national life. I suggest that this celebration of royal domesticity engendered popular support for the House of Windsor in a period characterised by political turbulence at home and abroad. In this vein, I argue that social elites orchestrated royal family events as mass mediated nation-building exercises designed to create loyal subjects to the crown, and that new technologies transformed how media audiences and royalty interacted with one another.

The first section examines the media coverage of George and Marina’s engagement as well as documents from the Royal Archives to show how journalists were the initial driving force in creating the royal couple’s public images. Historians have noted how ‘human interest’ increasingly dominated

⁶ W. Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, (London, 1867), pp.5 and 51. On the prescriptive, as opposed to descriptive, nature of Bagehot’s work, see M. Taylor, ‘Introduction’, in W. Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, ed. M. Taylor (Oxford, 2001), p.ix.

⁷ S. Schama, ‘The Domestication of Majesty: Royal Family Portraiture, 1500-1850’, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, xvii (1986), pp.155-83; A. Schwarzenbach, ‘Royal Photographs: Emotions for the People’, *Contemporary European History*, xiii (2004), pp.255-80; L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT, 1992), pp.232-6; J. Fabricius Møller, ‘Domesticating a German Heir to the Danish Throne’, in F. L. Müller and H. Mehrkens, eds., *Sons and Heirs: Succession and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Basingstoke, 2016), pp.129-46; Schönpflug, ‘Heirs Before the Altar’, pp.61-7; Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, pp.144-98.

⁸ Historians have not examined the 1934 royal wedding in any detail. Rather, royal biographers have been left to retell sentimentalised accounts of the event. For example, see G. Ellison, *The Authorised Life Story of Princess Marina* (London, 1934); M. Wynn, ‘A Royal Romance: the Marriage of Princess Marina of Greece’, *Royalty Digest*, vii (2012), pp.51-58; S. Watson, *Marina: The Story of a Princess* (London, 1997). The primary sources I have used for this article include a large sample of ‘popular’ and ‘quality’ national newspapers, newsreel films from the five major British companies, and documents and photographs from the BBC Written Archive, Caversham (BBCWA), the National Portrait Gallery (NPG), the London Metropolitan Archive (LMA), Lambeth Palace Library (LPL), Westminster Abbey Library (WAL), and the Royal Archives, Windsor (RA). I have referenced newsreels using the titles and dates assigned to them by the British Universities Film & Video Council’s ‘News on Screen’ database which provides researchers with a comprehensive overview of all available newsreel footage: <http://bufvc.ac.uk/newsonscreen>

British news in the late 1920s and early 1930s with reporters laying bare the personal lives of public figures in order to foster an emotional affinity between media audiences and the famous.⁹ In 1934 the press exposed more intimate details about George and Marina's romance to the public than had been deemed acceptable with earlier royal love stories. The prince and princess also proved more willing than any previous members of the royal family to distinguish themselves as modern celebrities by publicising an idealised romance which emphasised their compatibility and glamour: they became the first royals to agree to filmed interviews, to wave at crowds, and to kiss on camera. I suggest that the couple's publicity strategy enabled journalists to generate the impression that their romance chimed with a new emotional culture centred on love and personal fulfilment, and that it helped to divert attention away from Marina's inauspicious status as an exiled Greek princess.¹⁰ I also argue that news editors framed the coverage of the couple's engagement and wedding with a female audience in mind: it formed part of a wider attempt by the media to discursively define modern British womanhood along contours of consumption, beauty, and glamour.¹¹

In the second section I explore the exchanges between the BBC, the Church of England, and the royal household as they orchestrated the first royal wedding which was broadcast live by radio to the public. Historians have identified how palace officials were particularly conscious of the social and political changes unleashed by the First World War and how they worked tirelessly to 'democratise' monarchy after 1918. Courtiers organised royal family tours of industrial Britain and the empire, promoted royal philanthropy, and helped to align the crown with public morality in order to prevent criticism of the monarchy arising among an increasingly empowered populace.¹² Matt Houlbrook has

⁹ On the media and celebrity culture, see A. Bingham and M. Conboy, *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the Present* (Oxford, 2015), pp.97-130; L. Beers, 'A Model MP? Ellen Wilkinson, Gender, Politics and Celebrity Culture in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, x (2013), pp.236-45; E. Owens, 'The Changing Media Representation of T. E. Lawrence and Celebrity Culture in Britain, 1919-1935', *Cultural and Social History*, xii (2015), pp.465-88; C. Ponce de Leon, *Self-Exposure: Human-Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1940* (London, 2002), pp.53-7.

¹⁰ On British emotional culture in the mid-twentieth century, see C. Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford, 2013), pp.1-19; F. Mort, 'Love in a Cold Climate: Letters, Public Opinion and Monarchy in the 1936 Abdication Crisis', *Twentieth Century British History*, xxv (2014), pp.30-62; M. Houlbrook, 'A Pin to See the Peepshow': Culture, Fiction and Selfhood in Edith Thompson's Letters, 1921-1922', *Past and Present*, ccvii (2010), pp.215-49.

¹¹ A. Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Interwar Britain* (Oxford, 2004); I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'The Body and Consumer Culture', in I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain: Social, Cultural and Political Change* (Harlow, 2001), pp.183-97.

¹² F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy* (New Haven, CT, 1995), pp.183-84; F. Prochaska, 'George V and Republicanism, 1917-1919', *Twentieth-Century British History*, x (1999), pp.27-51; W. Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism: The Transformation of the British Monarchy, 1861-1914* (Basingstoke, 1996), p.79; P. Williamson, 'The Monarchy and Public Values, 1900-1953', in A. Olechnowicz, ed., *The Monarchy and the British Nation, 1780 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.223-57; I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Keep Fit and Play the Game: George VI, Outdoor Recreation and Social Cohesion in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, xi (2014), pp.111-29; C. Kaul,

emphasised the importance of the palace's relationships with the powerbrokers who controlled the mass culture industry in these years and he has uncovered the elite networks which enabled courtiers to influence the cultural production of the House of Windsor's public image.¹³ I develop these ideas in exploring the often fraught negotiations between the royal household, the Archbishop of Canterbury, other churchmen, and BBC executives as they organised a broadcast which would both communicate the wedding service's dignity and appeal to a national listenership. I argue that the BBC's ambitions to broadcast the event accorded with its wider nation-building activities in this period, which included elevating the tastes of its listeners and integrating new female and working-class audiences into the public sphere around the focal-point of monarchy.¹⁴ I also suggest that the BBC's efforts formed part of a wider media campaign to build a 'peaceable nation' centred on the royal family.¹⁵ At a time when public order seemed threatened by internal and external forces, the new media technologies of sound newsreel, photographic close-ups, and wireless conveyed scenes of a nation united in celebration of George and Marina's wedding.

The final part of this article examines the public reception of the 1934 royal wedding. Andrzej Olechnowicz has noted how historians have tended to overlook the way the monarchy's public image has been internalised by media audiences – especially for the period before 1937, after which Mass-Observation provides glimpses into popular attitudes to royal personalities and events.¹⁶ Historians have argued that radio brought ordinary people closer to royalty than ever before and enabled engaged citizenship by generating a democratic space in which listeners affirmed their loyalty to the crown by joining in nationally shared experiences.¹⁷ Drawing on recent work from the history of emotions, I

'Monarchical Display and the Politics of Empire: Princes of Wales and India, 1870-1920s', *Twentieth Century British History*, xvii (2006), pp.464-88.

¹³ M. Houlbrook, *Prince of Tricksters: The Incredible True Story of Netley Lucas, Gentleman Crook* (Chicago, IL, 2016), pp.223-76.

¹⁴ M. Andrews, 'Homes Both Sides of the Microphone: Wireless and Domestic Space in Inter-war Britain', *Women's History Review*, xxi (2012), pp.606-7; E. Colpus, 'The Week's Good Cause: Mass Culture and Cultures of Philanthropy at the Inter-war BBC', *Twentieth Century British History*, xxii (2011), pp.321-22; D. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford, 1998), pp.179-80; T. Hajkowski, *The BBC and National Identity in Britain, 1922-53* (Manchester, 2010), pp.83-92.

¹⁵ J. Lawrence, *Electing Our Masters: The Hustings in British Politics From Hogarth to Blair* (Oxford, 2009), pp.97 and 116-29.

¹⁶ A. Olechnowicz, 'Historians and the Modern British Monarchy', in A. Olechnowicz, ed., *The Monarchy and the British Nation, 1780 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2007), p.27. For Mass-Observation and monarchy, see Mass-Observation, *May the Twelfth: Mass-Observation Day Surveys 1937: By Over Two Hundred Observers* (2nd edn., London, 1987); P. Ziegler, *Crown and People* (London, 1978); L. M. Harris, *Long to Reign Over Us? The Status of the Royal Family in the Sixties* (London, 1966).

¹⁷ J. Richards, 'The Monarchy and Film, 1900-2006', in A. Olechnowicz, ed., *The Monarchy and the British Nation, 1780 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.258-79; I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Royal Death and Living Memorials: The Funerals and Commemoration of George V and George VI, 1936-52', *Historical Research*, lxxxix (2015), pp.158-75; P. Scannell and D. Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting, I: 1922-1939, Serving the Nation* (Oxford, 1991), pp.280-81.

examine letters written to the organisers of the royal wedding and the British press to argue that the radio broadcast of the event worked to enhance ‘affective integration’ around the focal point of the monarchy with many listeners experiencing a strong sense of national belonging as they joined in, and empathised with, the family story at the heart of the occasion.¹⁸ Thus, I suggest that the collaboration between the media, monarchy, and church heightened ordinary people’s awareness of the centrality of the House of Windsor to national public life. Notably, this awareness was shaped by events outside Britain too: letters reveal that media audiences internalised the imagery of a cheerful nation gathered in emotional communion around the royal wedding by comparing Britain’s festive spirit with the growing disorder which troubled European politics in the early 1930s.

I

Journalists were primarily responsible for generating and maintaining public interest in Prince George and Princess Marina’s engagement and wedding. In the middle of August 1934, George visited Prince Paul of Yugoslavia (Marina’s brother-in-law) at his summer residence on Bohinj Lake, and there he met the Greek princess. The two had known one another for five years and, according to the first press reports on the betrothal, ‘amid the idyllic surroundings of the Slovenian Alps’ their ‘friendship ripened into love.’¹⁹ However, the *Daily Mail* ‘scooped’ the story of the royal engagement before it was officially announced. A correspondent from the newspaper had confronted George after an opera performance in Salzburg and asked him to confirm the rumour circulated by a Viennese newspaper that he had proposed to Marina. The prince requested that the reporter deny all speculation stating that ‘there is no truth at all in these rumours.’²⁰ The *Mail*’s revelation compelled the couple to officially announce their engagement the next day, but in doing so they signalled their intention to adopt a more active role than was normal for royalty by engaging with journalists in order to shape their public images. The couple agreed to a series of newspaper and newsreel interviews, as well as a number of staged film and photograph opportunities, in which they emphasised three things: their emotional fulfilment, Marina’s happiness at becoming a British royal, and their modern glamour.

In 1923, Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon had given a reporter from the *Evening News* an ‘exclusive

¹⁸ On the importance of emotional bonds to the public’s relationship with the British monarchy in the twentieth century, see Schwarzenbach, ‘Royal Photographs’, pp.263 and 267-68. For the term ‘affective integration’, see J. Perry, ‘Christmas as a Nazi Holiday: Colonising the Christmas Mood’, in L. Pine, ed., *Life and Times in Nazi Germany* (London, 2016), pp.263-89.

¹⁹ *Daily Mail*, 29 Aug. 1934, p.5; *Daily Mirror*, 29 Aug. 1934, p.1; *News of the World*, 2 Sep. 1934, p.10.

²⁰ *Daily Mail*, 27 Aug. 1934, p.11.

interview' describing how she was 'so very happy' following her engagement to the duke of York. However, her biographer has speculated that she might have received an official warning to resist the advances of the press because after this there were no further interviews.²¹ Royal protocol discouraged revelation and George's original 'denial' of his engagement typified this approach. In breaking with convention, he and Marina exercised caution in choosing who they talked to. Reuters news agency wrote to George's equerry, Major H. W. Butler, to angrily complain that the prince had granted an interview to a Yugoslavian newspaper having told other journalists 'that it [was] strictly forbidden for him to give interviews for the press.'²² The couple thus seem to have selectively engaged with the media in order to publicise their story. Notably, they did grant an audience to the *Daily Express*. In what the newspaper described on its front-page as the 'First Interview with the Royal Lovers', George was recorded as explaining how the engagement was 'all very sudden and unexpected' but that he and Marina were 'very happy'. The journalist noted how on meeting the couple in the Hotel de l'Europe in Salzburg they had 'been sharing a joke – and laughing consumedly over it.'²³ First-hand revelations like these seemed to provide authentic insights into the unfolding romance and conveyed the couple's emotional fulfilment and like-mindedness. Their compatibility was also communicated through large front-page photographs with captions which highlighted their attractive physical features. Marina was described as a 'tall, beautiful' and 'charming blue-eyed brunette'. The prince was similarly 'tall, blue-eyed and good-looking', and together they formed the 'handsomest royal couple in Europe.'²⁴

Historians have noted how romantic self-fulfilment, mutual understanding, and sexual attraction became increasingly important to the way the British public viewed heterosexual relationships in this period.²⁵ The media's narration of the human drama of the royal engagement reflected these themes and was meant to encourage the public to empathise with the couple. The message that it was a 'true love match' also mirrored wider expectations relating to royal romance.²⁶ After the First World War,

²¹ W. Shawcross, *Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother: the Official Biography* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp.154-5. Also see the *Daily Mirror*, 17 Jan. 1923, p.19.

²² RA/GDKH/WED/A01 – Letter from H. D. Harrison to H. W. Butler, 3 Sep. 1934.

²³ *Daily Express*, 30 Aug. 1934, p.1.

²⁴ *Daily Express*, 29 Aug. 1934, p.1; *News of the World*, 2 Sep. 1934, p.10.

²⁵ Langhamer, *The English in Love*, pp.1-19; M. Collins, *Modern Love: An Intimate History of Men and Women in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 2002), pp.1-12; R. McKibbin, 'Introduction', in M. Stopes, *Married Love*, ed. R. McKibbin (Oxford, 2004), pp.vii-li; A. Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press, 1918-1978* (Oxford, 2009), pp.201-2.

²⁶ *Daily Mail*, 30 Aug. 1934, p.11; *Daily Mirror*, 30 Aug. 1934, p.3. Notably, rumours in closed court circles hinted that ulterior motives had brought George and Marina together. For the suggestion that their marriage was a 'sham' designed to cover up the prince's dalliances, see H. Vickers, *Elizabeth: The Queen Mother* (London, 2005), p.123; C. Warwick, *George*

George V strengthened the British identity of the House of Windsor by breaking with the tradition of dynastic intermarriage and allowing his relatives to marry into the English and Scottish aristocracy. Beginning with Princess Patricia of Connaught's wedding in 1919, this turn inwards towards so-called 'commoners' encouraged the belief that young royals now had the opportunity to select their spouses according to their personal desires. The king's daughter, Princess Mary, and son, Prince Albert, duke of York, married suitors of their choosing in 1922 and 1923.²⁷ Furthermore, the media's response to George and Marina's romance was influenced by two Scandinavian royal love stories from the early 1930s. Princes Lennart and Sigvard of Sweden gave up their titles and positions in line to the throne in order to marry commoners of their choosing in 1932 and 1934 respectively. In both cases, British newsreels ecstatically proclaimed that 'all the world loves a lover' and emphasised that the princes had ignored King Gustaf V's express wishes by 'choosing to obey the dictates of [their] heart[s].'²⁸ These events augmented a royal emotional culture where love was perceived as the key to happiness and, in the Swedish cases, more important than duty. *British Movietone News* accordingly began its first newsreel on George and Marina's betrothal declaring how 'all the world loves a lover, especially a royal lover.'²⁹

After their stay in Salzburg, the royal couple drove 200 miles by motorcar to the Bled home of Prince Paul. There they allowed *British Movietone* to record them walking in the gardens of the estate with their hosts and presented a 'film greeting' to audiences in Britain. Standing side-by-side in front of the newsreel camera, George spoke first: 'We have received so many congratulations, we want to thank everyone for all their kindness to us.' The princess then followed suit: 'I am so very happy and looking forward to come to England (sic).' This greeting was a remarkable innovation. Never before had British royalty directly addressed the public through the cinema.³⁰ Although the king had spoken to his subjects over the radio at Christmas for the previous two years, his messages avoided emotional expression and instead focused on political and social issues. With the advent of sound newsreels in the late 1920s, George and Marina were able to present an intimate greeting which provided viewers

and Marina: *Duke and Duchess of Kent* (London, 1988), pp.69-71. Importantly, this idea had no bearing at all on the public projection or popular reception of the romance in 1934.

²⁷ *Daily Mirror*, 24 Nov. 1921, p.3; 26 Apr. 1923, p.7; 27 Apr. 1923, p.2. Also see C. Warwick, *Two Centuries of Royal Weddings* (Worthing, 1980), pp.36-48 and J. Pope-Hennessy, *Queen Mary, 1867-1953* (London, 1959), pp.518-9.

²⁸ *Pathé Super Sound Gazette*, 'A Royal Romance', 16 Mar. 1931 and 'All the World Loves a Lover', 12 Mar. 1934; *British Paramount News*, 'Prince Chooses Love', 29 Feb. 1932 and 'Love Before Rank', 12 Mar. 1934.

²⁹ *British Movietone News*, 'Royal Romance', 30 Aug. 1934. *Pathé Gazette* first used the phrase 'all the world loves a lover' in relation to the duke of York's engagement in 1923 – 'All the World Loves a Lover', 29 Jan. 1923.

³⁰ *British Movietone News*, 'Prince George and Princess Marina Send Greetings Through Movietone', 3 Sep. 1934.

with what appeared to be informal glimpses into their romance. In reality, of course, these were highly choreographed scenes which resembled a 1920s cinemagazine genre titled 'The Stars at Home'.³¹ This film series humanised famous people by exposing their home lives to public view; celebrities engaged in everyday activities like gardening, sport, and caring for pets. Given these themes, it was natural that George's German Shepherd made an appearance in his master's arms as part of the *Movietone* film.

After their trip to Bled, George and Marina parted ways, the prince returning to Britain and the princess to her home in Paris. Marina and her family had lived as exiles in the French capital since 1924 having had to flee Greece after a series of upheavals that sprung from the First World War led to the expulsion of the monarchy and its replacement with a republic. On arriving back in her adoptive city, Marina agreed to another series of interviews, this time with newsreel reporters. These interviews formed part of a public relations campaign led by the princess and those close to her to play up her romance with George while simultaneously playing down her unfavourable status as an exiled royal. Striking the same notes sounded as part of the *Movietone* greeting, Marina emphasised how pleased she was to join the House of Windsor: 'I love Paris, but obviously I am so happy to go to England and to become English.'³² Marina's father, Prince Nicholas, and Grace Ellison, who was a friend of the Greek royal family, also stressed to interviewers how 'fond of England' the princess was, that 'there [was] nothing political in the marriage', and how she 'had always made it clear that she would never marry for anything but love.'³³ These authoritative voices minimised concerns about the suitability of the love match based on Marina's inauspicious family history by instead highlighting the genuine affection which characterised the royal engagement and the princess's enthusiasm at relinquishing her association with the Greek royal house in order to become a British royal.

Given her past experiences, the princess seems to have understood the importance of a popular media image to the survival of elite institutions. According to royal biographer Hugo Vickers, Marina made a lifelong adversary of the duchess of York when she criticised her as 'not even mediatised' – suggesting the Greek princess valued the role of the media in the creation of her own popular image.³⁴ Indeed, the other theme which she emphasised to the newsreel interviewers in Paris was her famous

³¹ For example, see *Eve And Everybody's Film Review*, 'Stars at Home - Miss Nellie Wallace', 3 Nov. 1921 and 'Stars at Home - Matheson Lang', 29 Sep. 1921.

³² *Pathé Super Sound Gazette*, 'The Bride to Be: Princess Marina Goes Shopping in Paris', 17 Sep. 1934; *British Paramount News*, 'France: Princess Marina of Greece Talks About Her Wedding Plans to George, Duke of Kent', 17 Sep. 1934.

³³ *Daily Mirror*, 30 Aug. 1934, p.3; *Daily Mail*, 29 Aug. 1934, p.5.

³⁴ Vickers, *Elizabeth*, p.173.

fashion style, discussing at length the plans for her wedding dress and trousseau. Along with the front-page press reports on the couple's emotional fulfilment, coverage of the royal engagement focused on George and Marina's glamour and particularly the princess's dress sense. From the outset, it was presented as a signifier of her modernity:

She has that indefinable quality known as 'chic', and the style that she has crafted for herself has been the envy and admiration of all of Paris, where she is a well-known figure. On a formal occasion she can be royally dignified; in private life she is charming, unaffected and friendly. But always she is 'chic' – on the mountainside or in the ballroom.³⁵

The way the meaning of 'chic' eluded the *News of the World's* journalist shows how Marina's fashion style was highly modern because it resisted classification. Royal fashion has long attracted attention and scholars have noted the princess's distinctive elegance. A new colour – Marina blue – was named after her and she wore the 'first royal wedding dress in which line and style were more important than decoration.'³⁶ The ultimate recognition of this style came in a twenty-six page centerpiece feature in *Vogue* which reviewed her wedding gown and trousseau.³⁷ By posing for the *Vogue* photographers and by explaining to the newsreel interviewers in Paris how her wedding dress would be made by the leading British designer Edward Molyneux, Marina helped build a media image defined by a glamour that carried great appeal as part of a national culture that celebrated female fashion.³⁸ The impact this image had on sections of the public can be detected in the many letters which accompanied gifts of shoes, dresses, and other accessories sent to Marina as wedding presents by fashion retailers – each desperate for the princess's personal endorsement.³⁹

With her highly modern style the princess also seemed well-matched in George, and this public image of the like-minded lovers again helped dispel any lingering doubts about their suitability. The pleasure both reportedly took in dancing, art, theatre, and cinema marked them out as members of a fashionable social elite renowned for its modernity.⁴⁰ This part of their personae was also illustrated in front-page press photographs published after their betrothal was announced: George sat at the wheel

³⁵ *News of the World*, 2 Sep. 1934, p.10.

³⁶ C. McDowell, *A Hundred Years of Royal Style* (London, 1985), p.76.

³⁷ *Vogue*, 28 Nov. 1934, pp.74-99.

³⁸ G. Howell, *In Vogue: Sixty Years of Celebrities and Fashion from British Vogue* (London, 1978), p.107. In its 3 Oct. 1934 edition, *Vogue* informed readers that 'the coming royal wedding has already had an influence on London's fashions, firing women's imaginations' (p.77).

³⁹ RA/GDKH/WED/C – For example, the present of waterproof coats with a letter from Samuel Bros of Manchester, sent to the Private Secretary of H.R.H Princess Marina, 15 Nov. 1934; and the present of shoes and a handbag with a letter from Mrs R. G. Scudamore of Brown Inc. to U. Alexander, Nov. 23 1934.

⁴⁰ *Daily Herald*, 29 Aug. 1934, p.1; *Daily Express*, 29 Aug. 1934, p.2; *Daily Telegraph*, 29 Aug. 1934, p.11; *Gaumont British News*, 'Prince George's Engagement', 30 Aug. 1934.

of a sports car next to the princess; both held lit cigarettes.⁴¹ Historians have suggested that a woman's involvement in motoring and smoking symbolised her 'feminine modernity' between the wars.⁴² The prince, meanwhile, was renowned for his love of speed too. The *News Chronicle* characterised him as 'ultra-modern' remarking how 'he is acknowledged as the best car driver in the Royal Family and rivals his brother, the Prince of Wales, as the best dancer.'⁴³ Comparisons like this one, and the news later reported that Edward would act as George's best man, linked the younger prince to the modern masculinity of his older brother with its thrill-seeking glamour.⁴⁴ Historians have discussed how the Prince of Wales personified the metropolitan society set, and media coverage of George and Marina made it clear that the couple belonged to this exclusive caste of celebrity too.⁴⁵ Reports on their shared interests thus not only evoked the new culture of personal compatibility but also helped to reconfigure the kind of celebrity identity associated with the British royal family.

The celebrity of George and Marina differed, however, from that of the Prince of Wales in one important way. As heir to the throne, Edward's public image was bound to his constitutional position. As historian Frank Mort has argued, the British media refrained from presenting the Prince of Wales in the same way as the film stars of the period: respectful of the distance between their camera lenses and the prince, they ensured that, in addition to informal images, he was presented in a more dignified manner as befitting a future king and emperor.⁴⁶ As more minor royals, the same rules did not apply to George and Marina and, as discussed, they broke with royal protocol by courting the media's attention through more informal displays of public intimacy. This difference was particularly evident from the way Marina arrived in England from France in mid-September *en route* to Balmoral where she would discuss her wedding plans with her fiancé and his family. According to the media descriptions of her disembarkation at Folkestone, Marina captivated the crowds who had waited to greet her:

⁴¹ *Daily Mirror*, 30 Aug. 1934, p.1; *Daily Express*, 30 Aug. 1934, p.1.

⁴² P. Tinkler and C. Warsh, 'Feminine Modernity in Interwar Britain and North America: Corsets, Cars, and Cigarettes', *Journal of Women's History*, xx (2008), pp.113-43.

⁴³ *News Chronicle*, 29 Aug. 1934, p.2; 30 Aug. 1934, 1, p.4. On speed, technology, and modernity, see B. Rieger, "'Fast Couples': Technology, Gender and Modernity in Britain and Germany During the Nineteen-Thirties", *Historical Research*, lxxvi (2003), pp.364-88.

⁴⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 22 Sep. 1934, p.1.

⁴⁵ L. Mayhall, 'The Prince of Wales *Versus* Clark Gable: Anglophone Celebrity and Citizenship Between the Wars', *Cultural and Social History*, iv (2007), pp.529-43; R. McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford, 1998), p.22.

⁴⁶ F. Mort, 'On Tour with the Prince: Monarchy, Imperial Politics and Publicity in the Prince of Wales' Visits to Canada and Australasia 1919-1920', (forthcoming paper, 2017).

From the first moment she was seen – slim, beautiful and exquisitely dressed – excitedly waving a white handkerchief on the upper-deck of the cross-Channel steamer, the Princess enslaved the wildly cheering spectators massed on the pier.⁴⁷

The press published large front-page photographs of the princess smiling and waving to the crowds which emphasised how she had visibly interacted with spectators. These images were accompanied by the message delivered by Marina to reporters that ‘I shall love your great nation very dearly, and it seems as though your people have already some affection for me (sic).’⁴⁸ The princess’s eagerness to engage with the public by waving to them was, in fact, exceptional: the waving of an upraised arm or handkerchief was not something commonly associated with British royalty before 1934. Newspapers even noted how this innovative gesture contrasted with the bowing traditionally used by the royal family to signal their appreciation of the crowd’s cheers.⁴⁹

At a time when European dictators were popularising gestural salutes through the new mediums of film and photography in order to harness the support of their peoples and create visual images of disciplined nations united around the focal point of the leader, Marina’s wave seems to have similarly intensified the personal connections between members of the public and the royal family.⁵⁰ Reporting the princess’s arrival in England, the *News Chronicle* informed readers how ‘she was soon waving both hands to [the crowd] almost as frantically as they were waving to her.’⁵¹ Marina’s wave thus brought her closer to ordinary people who were able to connect to her through new informal codes of etiquette and deportment. Both popular and quality newspapers emphasised the significance of this gestural rapport by juxtaposing photographs of the waving princess alongside images of large, excited crowds (Fig.1).⁵² These juxtapositions presented Marina as an exalted celebrity with a mass following. The moment that best captured this imagery was when she and George became the first royals to wave from Buckingham Palace’s balcony following their wedding.⁵³ The media coverage of the Armistice celebrations outside the palace in November 1918 had transformed the royal balcony appearance into a ritual of national significance: the public were presented as symbolically united around the focal

⁴⁷ *Daily Mirror*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.1.

⁴⁸ *Daily Herald*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.1; *Daily Express*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.1; *Daily Sketch*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.1; *Daily Mirror*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.1.

⁴⁹ *Daily Sketch*, 26 Nov. 1934, p.12. The article was titled ‘Why Princess Waves’.

⁵⁰ M. Winkler, *The Roman Salute: Cinema, History, Ideology* (Columbus, OH, 2009), pp.88-121.

⁵¹ *News Chronicle*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.1.

⁵² *Daily Sketch*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.1; *The Times*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.16; *Daily Mirror*, 17 Sep. 1934, pp.14-15; *Daily Express*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.20.

⁵³ Photographs like the one on the front-page of the *News Chronicle*, 30 Nov. 1934, show how George and Marina waved, as do newsreels. Comparable photographs and newsreels from the earlier royal weddings in the 1920s show that the other couples did not wave.

point of the monarchy.⁵⁴ Marina modernised this ritual to suit the more emotionally expressive 1930s. According to *Pathé Gazette*, the cheering that greeted the newly titled duke and duchess of Kent as they emerged onto the balcony with their hands upheld could be heard a mile away and represented ‘a spontaneous demonstration of happy, affectionate, and loyal emotion.’⁵⁵ The many newsreel and press comments like this one suggest that the more direct, informal modes of communication introduced by George and Marina helped personalise the relationship between the House of Windsor and the public.

[INSERT FIG.1 HERE]

Perhaps even more significant than Marina’s popularisation of the royal wave was the way she and George shared the first royal kiss ever caught on camera. When Marina arrived by train from Folkestone at Victoria Station in London she and the prince embraced for a fleeting moment, George kissing her on the cheek. But to judge from press reports it was much more romantic: ‘When Princess Marina stepped from the Folkestone boat train at Victoria yesterday Prince George took her in his arms and kissed her. Then she kissed him. For a moment both seemed to have forgotten everyone else.’⁵⁶ The *Daily Express* drew attention to this description by capitalising and emboldening its text. The *Daily Sketch* similarly reported the kiss as the ‘magic moment of the day’, while the *Daily Mirror* remarked that ‘thousands of London people witnessed a true lovers’ greeting.’⁵⁷ Despite these effusive descriptions, no British newspaper actually published photographs of the kiss. It is possible that this was because pictures would have failed to do justice to the press’s dramatic accounts – George’s peck on Marina’s cheek was hardly the true lovers’ greeting. Alternatively, it may have been that editors deemed it too risqué to publish a photograph of the kiss as it would have been the first time that the amorous gesture with its sexual connotations was visually portrayed in relation to royalty. Whatever the reasoning, the newsreels were not as reticent. *Gaumont British News* presented cinemagoers with the first onscreen royal kiss and this scoop initiated a much bolder approach to the exposure of royal

⁵⁴ *Pictorial News*, ‘The Day: Ours’, 14 Nov. 1918; *Gaumont Graphic*, ‘Germany Signs the Armistice’, 14 Nov. 1918. Also see Cannadine ‘The Context’, pp.128 and 140-41.

⁵⁵ *British Pathé*, ‘The Royal Wedding’, 3 Dec. 1934.

⁵⁶ *Daily Express*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.1.

⁵⁷ *Daily Sketch*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.3; *Daily Mirror*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.3.

intimacy, dispelling old taboos.⁵⁸ Reporting the second occasion that George welcomed his fiancé to England a week before the wedding, the press printed front-page photos of the couple kissing. *Pathé Gazette* went so far as to use the kiss as the backdrop to its title sequence, showing the momentary embrace twice as part of an attempt to entice viewers' attention through these intimate scenes.⁵⁹

While the media drew special attention to the new kinds of intimacy which characterised the 1934 royal love story, it is important not to lose sight of George and Marina's agency in the creation of their public images. The prince seems to have understood Marina's popular appeal and he wrote to Prince Paul of Yugoslavia to describe spectators' reactions to her initial arrival in London:

Everyone is so delighted with her – the crowd especially – 'cos when she arrived at Victoria Station they expected a dowdy princess – such as unfortunately my family are – but when they saw this lovely chic creature – they could hardly believe it and even the men were interested and shouted 'Don't change – don't let them change you!'⁶⁰

The 'don't let them change you!' remark might have reflected a public concern about the potentially negative effects that the old-fashioned court could have on the modern Marina, and it certainly seems that the princess's unique glamour distinguished her from other royal women who were deemed to be more restrained like the duchess of York. When Princess Alexandra of Denmark first arrived in London in anticipation of her marriage to the Prince of Wales in 1863, the media feted her for her distinctive beauty and elegance.⁶¹ Now, more than seventy years on, Marina, who was a distant relative of Alexandra through the Danish royal line, was similarly elevated for the personal qualities she brought to British shores and her modern royal style which, to judge from the unparalleled press and newsreel coverage, had captured the nation's imagination.⁶²

George was intent on promoting the popular image which he shared with the princess. During their stay together in London, he and Marina sat for English society photographer Dorothy Wilding. To date, the most informal photographs taken of a royal couple were those of the Yorks prior to their wedding in 1923: the couple posed next to one another, although there was no physical contact; the duke, dressed in a lounge suit, rested against a table with his arms crossed so that he and his fiancé,

⁵⁸ *Gaumont British News*, 'Princess Marina at Victoria Station and Ballater', 20 Sep. 1934.

⁵⁹ *Daily Mirror*, 22 Nov. 1934, p.1; *News Chronicle*, 22 Nov. 1934, p.1; *Daily Sketch*, 22 Nov. 1934, p.1; *Pathé Super Sound Gazette*, 'Royal Reception to Princess Marina', 22 Nov. 1934.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Watson, *Marina*, p.101.

⁶¹ Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, pp.51-2; K. Strasdin, 'Empire Dressing: The Design and Realization of Queen Alexandra's Coronation Gown', *Journal of Design History*, xxv (2012), p.155.

⁶² For comparisons of the two royal brides see the *Daily Mail*, 30 Aug. 1934, p.11; H. Normanton, 'Our Danish Royal Bride', *The Queen*, 12 Dec. 1934, p.13; BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – BBC Internal Circulating Memo, 11 Oct. 1934.

who was wearing a dress and a pearl necklace, were positioned at a similar height.⁶³ Wilding helped craft much more emotionally expressive scenes between George and Marina which emphasised their modernity and the close bond the couple ostensibly shared. In one of the Wilding photos, Marina, dressed in a dark sleek dress, sat in an armchair with George – in pin-striped lounge suit – perched next to her, his arm draped over her shoulder.⁶⁴ However, the most intimate Wilding photo showed the lovers side-on, George in front, with Marina resting her chin over his shoulder (Fig. 2). Wilding had recently photographed the Hollywood couple Gertrude Lawrence and Douglas Fairbanks Jr. in a similar pose.⁶⁵ The prince and princess's public personae thus overlapped with both the celebrity of film stars and the society set – as conveyed through the art deco stylised modernity associated with Wilding's portraiture in these years. As historian Val Williams has noted, 'Wilding made women look as they had never looked before – beautiful, starkly elegant and uncompromisingly modern', hence her popularity with the very famous.⁶⁶

[INSERT FIG.2 HERE]

George gave express permission for the widespread reproduction of the Wilding photographs. The company Raphael Tuck & Sons wrote to the prince's equerry, Major Butler, asking for George's approval to produce a series of postcards using the photos. Desmond Tuck noted how Wilding 'made it perfectly clear that [the photographs had] not yet been passed for publication, but, with a view to the possibility that they might ultimately be, and in time for the Royal Wedding' his firm had developed negative reproductions 'in the hope that His Royal Highness may care to inspect them, and accord his sanction to us, to issue them for sale to the public.'⁶⁷ Matt Houlbrook has suggested that granting or withholding the official stamp of approval was one of the main ways the royal household was able to control the cultural production of the monarchy's iconography.⁶⁸ Butler's short reply that 'His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent has given his consent to the publication of the enclosed photographs' thus

⁶³ The *Mirror*'s wedding issue used this picture on its front-page and edited in the royal coat of arms between the couple to enhance the dignity of the scene, see *Daily Mirror*, 26 Apr. 1923, p.1. For the original, see NPG x130935, Vandyk, Jan. 1923.

⁶⁴ NPG x35653, Dorothy Wilding, Oct. 1934. Also see NPG x33897, Dorothy Wilding, Oct. 1934; NPG x46512, Dorothy Wilding, Oct. 1934.

⁶⁵ NPG x33887, Dorothy Wilding, Oct. 1934; NPG x46508, Dorothy Wilding, Oct. 1934.

⁶⁶ V. Williams, *Women Photographers: The Other Observers, 1900 to the Present* (London, 1986), p.152.

⁶⁷ RA/GDKH/WED/A01 – Letter from D. A. Tuck to H. W. Butler, 7 Nov. 1934.

⁶⁸ Houlbrook, *Prince of Tricksters*, pp.260-62.

conferred legitimacy on Tuck's souvenir postcards and suggests that George approved of the intimate way in which they presented him and his fiancé.⁶⁹

The prince's equerry also played an active role in shaping George and Marina's public images. He extended permission to the media and London restaurants to publish Wilding's photos, and he also vetted images to ensure they were appropriate.⁷⁰ The printers Valentine and Sons Ltd. wrote to Butler explaining that they had received instructions from the postcard distributor Messrs Carreras to supply them with a series of photographic cigarette cards 'depicting leading British popular personalities' and that they were 'particularly anxious' that George and Marina should be included in this series.⁷¹ This letter revealed how the royal lovers had shot to fame with their engagement and were deemed fitting subjects for inclusion on cigarette cards. More significant though was Butler's reply that 'you should allow me to see which photographs you intend to use, in case I might be able to suggest to you which ones would be suitable.'⁷² This approach reveals how courtiers tried to control the visual image of the royal family and should be interpreted in light of the fact that there was a thriving trade in unofficial pictures of royalty. When Tuck originally wrote to Butler requesting permission to publish postcards of the Wilding photos, he stated that 'there are, regrettably, on the market, produced by certain other firms, reproductions of H.R.H. Prince George and The Princess Marina, issued, presumably without sanction, and which do anything but justice to the Royal Personages they pretend to portray.'⁷³ At the time of Princess Mary's wedding in 1922, courtiers had banned the commercial reproduction of royal coats of arms for fear of degrading the crown's image.⁷⁴ But now, twelve years on, the palace adopted a more proactive role in promoting intimate pictures of George and Marina as part of an official royal visual culture stimulated by a growing trade in the popular image of monarchy and by a mass media committed to bringing royal domesticity closer to the public.

Given George and Marina's glamour, it is perhaps unsurprising that after the prince was killed suddenly in a plane crash in 1942 a female Mass-Observation respondent likened him to a Hollywood

⁶⁹ RA/GDKH/WED/A01 – Letter from H. W. Butler to D. A. Tuck, 8 Nov. 1934. For an advertisement for the Raphael Tuck & Sons' George and Marina postcards, see *The Illustrated London News*, 1 Dec. 1934, p.947.

⁷⁰ RA/GDKH/WED/A01 – Letter from the Editor of The Wireless Press to the palace press officer, 2 Nov. 1934 and reply containing assent on 6 Nov. 1934. For press reproductions of Wilding's photographs, see *Daily Mirror*, 29 Nov. 1934, p.1; *Daily Express*, 20 Nov. 1934, p.8. LMA/4364/02/022. This file in the London Metropolitan Archives contains over twenty different hotel invitations and menus that used Wilding's photographs to promote commercial events.

⁷¹ RA/GDKH/WED/A01 – Letter from D. S. Valentine to H. W. Butler, 2 Nov. 1934.

⁷² RA/GDKH/WED/A01 – Letter from H. W. Butler to D. S. Valentine, 6 Nov. 1934.

⁷³ RA/GDKH/WED/A01 – Letter from D. A. Tuck to H. W. Butler, 7 Nov. 1934.

⁷⁴ RA/LC/LCO/SPECIAL: Wedding 1922 File 19 – Letter from F. S. Osgood to B. M. Shiffers, 1 Feb. 1922.

celebrity: 'He was so popular – I really think he was the most popular member of the Royal Family. His visit to any factory would create excitement. The girls used to think of him as a film star.'⁷⁵ It is certainly the case that the media reported the couple's romance to resonate with the popular themes of love, beauty, and celebrity which dominated female-targeted news in this period. Houlbrook has noted how the home lives of royals were commodified for a domestic, feminised audience in the 1920s.⁷⁶ We should interpret the media's narration of the 1934 royal engagement and wedding as forming part of an attempt by news editors to achieve this type of audience identification and simultaneously define modern British womanhood along the contours of emotional fulfilment, fame, and fashion.⁷⁷ Marina notably became the first member of the royal family whose style was celebrated by the media for its mass appeal. The *Daily Herald* published a photograph of 'hats which Princess Marina liked in Paris being tried on in a London store yesterday' and informed its readers that 'ones just like them will soon be on sale.' This coverage even extended to the regional press with the *Bolton Evening News* stating that the princess had initiated a new hat fashion among young women, exclaiming how 'Marina hats are selling well, and sitting pretty!'⁷⁸

The media's efforts to appeal to the perceived tastes of British women were also evident in the way the press prioritised female journalists' insights into the royal romance. After its 'first interview' with the couple, the *Daily Express* printed an article by Winifred Loraine titled 'Princess Marina – As She Really Is'.⁷⁹ This mini-biography focused on Marina's domesticity, noting how 'she can cook and make her own dresses', in order to encourage readers to identify with her. The *Daily Mail* and *Mirror* also advertised reports prepared by their 'special woman correspondent[s]' – as though they offered a unique perspective on the love story.⁸⁰ The *News of the World* tellingly invited the romantic novelist Ruby Ayers to prepare some of its wedding coverage, her articles predictably climaxing in the kind of 'happy ending' for which she was renowned.⁸¹ And newsreel companies specially employed women to deliver commentaries on the royal romance too. One such voiceover preceded *British Movietone's* recording of George and Marina's innovative 'film greeting', and the same female reporter went onto

⁷⁵ MOA1/1/7/8/9.

⁷⁶ Houlbrook, *Prince of Tricksters*, pp.246-7.

⁷⁷ C. Grandy, *Heroes and Happy Endings: Class, Gender, and Nation in Popular Film and Fiction in Interwar Britain* (Manchester, 2014), pp.133-176; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'The Body', pp.183-97; Bingham, *Gender*, pp.78-81.

⁷⁸ *Daily Herald*, 18 Sep. 1934, p.6; *Bolton Evening News*, 29 Nov. 1934, p.2.

⁷⁹ *Daily Express*, 31 Aug. 1934, p.3.

⁸⁰ *Daily Mail*, 28 Nov. 1934, p.5; *Daily Mirror*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.30. See Bingham, *Family Newspapers*, pp.25-6 on the marginalisation of female journalists' voices in this period.

⁸¹ *News of the World*, 25 Nov. 1934, p.12; 2 Dec. 1934, pp.12-13; Grandy, *Heroes and Happy Endings*, pp.133-34.

provide a number of other commentaries on the romance as well.⁸² The shift in tone was particularly striking because other stories in the same newsreels remained narrated by men. These strategies then reveal how news editors sought to tailor their coverage of the royal wedding to the perceived tastes of an expanding female audience. Equally, though, they should be interpreted as evidence of the process by which British women's interests were discursively defined by love, glamour, and consumerism.

II

In late 1934, the British faced the challenges of protracted socio-economic dislocation at home and growing aggression from foreign powers which seemed intent on disrupting Europe's fragile peace.⁸³ The threat this kind of disorder represented to crowned heads of state was spectacularly dramatised at the beginning of October when King Alexander I of Yugoslavia was assassinated during a diplomatic mission to France. He had been working towards a Slavic-Latin pact with the French foreign minister to unite southern Europe against Hitler when he was shot and killed by a Bulgarian revolutionary – the newsreels projecting the brutal moments of the monarch's death around the world.⁸⁴ The men that surrounded the British throne and oversaw the royal family's public relations were highly sensitive to these social and political changes. In staging George and Marina's wedding they saw an opportunity to democratise the House of Windsor's public image by popularising its role as a model of Christian family life and as an emotional focal point of the nation.⁸⁵ The scale of the media interest in George and Marina's romance distinguished it from earlier royal love stories, and new media channels had helped create a public image which was more intimate and accessible than ever before. But courtiers understood that democratisation via new media existed in tension with the concern that overexposure could damage royalty's reputation at a time when the crown's future as the leading symbol which held the nation together was by no means assured. The royal household thus sought to elevate the dignity of the royal wedding whilst ensuring that the British public could participate in it in innovative ways. This tension played out in the exchanges between courtiers, clerics, and newsmen as they orchestrated the first royal family event ever broadcast live from Westminster Abbey to the nation and the world.

⁸² *British Movietone News*, 'Princess Marina Greeted in Britain', 22 Nov. 1934 and 'Ready for the Royal Wedding', 26 Nov. 1934.

⁸³ R. Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilization* (London, 2010), pp.181-6; J. Gardiner, *The Thirties: An Intimate History* (London, 2011), pp.147-87 and 432-7; M. Ceadel, 'The First British Referendum: The Peace Ballot, 1934-5', *ante*, xcv (1980), pp.810-39.

⁸⁴ For example, see *Gaumont British News*, 'Assassination', 11 Oct. 1934.

⁸⁵ Wolffe, *Great Deaths*, pp.224-5, 241, and 253-7; Williamson, 'The Monarchy and Public Values', pp.246-52.

The first meeting where these different interest groups came together in order to organise the royal wedding took place at George V's ancestral Scottish residence, Balmoral. Following their stay in London, George, Marina, and the princess's parents travelled north aboard the Aberdeen Express. When they disembarked at Ballater train station the royal lovers were given what *The Times* described as a 'real Highland welcome' by the thousands of spectators who had gathered to greet them and who crowded the roads leading to Balmoral.⁸⁶ On reaching the castle, the party was met by the Balmoral Highlanders in full ceremonial dress and the King's Piper playing the 'Hielan' Laddie'. Then, clad in tartan country attire, George V and his consort Queen Mary received their son and their Greek guests, posing arm-in-arm for photographers. Newspapers stated that these 'delightfully informal pictures', which included Prince George in kilt and sporran, showed the royals enjoying a 'family joke' (it later emerged that the king was trying to marshal his relatives into position for the photographers – to the amusement of all involved).⁸⁷ This was the first of several social engagements staged at the monarch's Scottish home which were widely reported on by the media. As with the extensive coverage that was later devoted to stories about the gold mined for Marina's wedding ring in North Wales, descriptions of the 'Ghillies' Ball' and the 'Highland reel' danced by the prince and princess enhanced the image of a royal family that seemed to value the customs of the Celtic nations, strengthening the idea that all of Britain could unite in celebrating the wedding.⁸⁸ The courtiers and Archbishop of Canterbury, who had also journeyed to Balmoral to help plan the marriage, believed the event should have this kind of inclusive appeal. Two issues were of particular concern: what role would the Greek Orthodox Church – which the princess and her family belonged to – play as part of a wedding conducted in the Church of England's ceremonial centre, Westminster Abbey? And would the king grant his permission to the BBC to broadcast the wedding service from inside the church to listeners across Britain?

George V's private secretary, Sir Clive Wigram, had written to Archbishop Cosmo Lang from Balmoral on 4 September noting how he was pleased that Lang would meet Marina and her parents as 'there is a good deal to be arranged':

Already questions are being asked as to what part the Greek Church will take in the ceremony, or whether there will have to be some sort of a ceremony by the Greek Church before the Marriage, which presumably will take place in Westminster Abbey. The Queen, in

⁸⁶ *The Times*, 18 Sep. 1934, p.12.

⁸⁷ *Daily Express*, 19 Sep. 1934, p.20; *The Times*, 19 Sep. 1934, p.14; *The Times*, 25 Sep. 1934, p.16.

⁸⁸ *Daily Mail*, 20 Sep., 1934, p.12; *British Movietone News*, 'Ballater – Princess Marina Greeted in Scotland', 20 Sep. 1934; *Gaumont British News*, 'Welsh Gold for Princess Marina's Ring', 8 Oct. 1934.

talking to me of possibilities, said something about the Blessing by the Greek Church being given in the Private Chapel at Buckingham Palace. I am however very vague as to what is being thought of, but it seemed well to prepare you, as I know that Their Majesties will wish to discuss the matter with you when you are staying here.⁸⁹

This letter revealed two things. First of all, it showed that George V and Queen Mary were concerned about the way royal family occasions were publicly staged and that they trusted Lang to help them plan the event. The archbishop was a long-standing friend and spiritual counsellor to the king and notably took on the role of speechwriter for the monarch's Christmas broadcast in December 1934.⁹⁰

Secondly, the letter demonstrated how Queen Mary was acutely aware of the potential problems that a joint-ceremony might create, advising that the Greek Church bless George and Marina's marriage in the private chapel at Buckingham Palace. Historians and royal biographers have presented the queen as an aloof, imperious figure of the Victorian period, but here she revealed a shrewd awareness of the importance of modern public relations in promoting the House of Windsor's position as a model of Christian family life.⁹¹ In 1919, Princess Patricia had become the first royal married in Westminster Abbey for more than five centuries.⁹² The staging of her nuptials and the royal weddings of 1922 and 1923 in the abbey turned these events into spectacles of national significance by increasing the public visibility of royal domesticity. However, this visibility had far-reaching implications. Those close to the throne, including Wigram and the queen, had to consider how to organise royal weddings in order to broaden monarchy's popular appeal whilst maintaining the dignity of crown and church alike.⁹³

When Lang solicited guidance from colleagues on the matter of the Greek service, Canon J. A. Douglas, General Secretary of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations, was 'strongly of the opinion that it would be better to hold a separate ceremony so far as the Greek Orthodox Church is

⁸⁹ LPL/Lang/129/f.311 – Letter from C. Wigram to C. G. Lang, 4 Sep. 1934.

⁹⁰ Williamson, 'The Monarchy', p.228. N.B. Robert Beaken's biography of Lang also attributes the first modern royal tour of Britain in 1912 to his initiative noting how, as Archbishop of York, he urged the recently crowned George V to spend more time with his subjects in their 'towns, villages and workshops' – see R. Beaken, *Cosmo Lang: Archbishop in War and Crisis* (London, 2012), esp. Ch.4 and 5.

⁹¹ B. Pimlott, *The Queen: Elizabeth II and the Monarchy* (London, 2002), pp.25 and 192; Gardiner, *The Thirties*, pp.458 and 527; Pope-Hennessy, *Queen Mary*, pp.467-9; Williamson, 'The Monarchy', pp.246-52.

⁹² *Daily Mirror*, 28 Jan. 1919, p.5; 28 Feb. 1919, p.1. Courtiers made sure Patricia was visible both to spectators and cameramen on her wedding day, using carriages with enlarged windows in the procession to the abbey, and an open-top landau on the return to Buckingham Palace.

⁹³ Wigram had helped orchestrate the royal weddings of the 1920s, advising how carriage processions should be staged and on the suitability of royal ostentation at a time of industrial unrest. See RA/PS/PSO/GV/PS/MAIN/35056/B/4 – Memo from C. Wigram to undisclosed recipient, 29 Jan. 1922; RA/PS/PSO/GV/PS/MAIN/35056/B/7 – Memo from C. Wigram to Lord Chamberlain, 23 Feb. 1922. Queen Mary had also intervened in the preparations for her daughter Princess Mary's wedding in 1922 after the Dean of Westminster expressed concern that the ladies in attendance would not be wearing head-coverings in the abbey. The Dean thought that the royal wedding should set an example to the rest of the nation against 'eccentric and emancipated "feminists" [who had] in the last few years been trying to attend Church bare-headed'. Queen Mary suggested that 'small close-fitting caps' be worn with evening dress in order to maintain the 'reverence' of the event: RA/PS/PSO/GV/PS/MAIN/35056/B/4 – Letter from the Dean of Westminster to the State Chamberlain, 27 Jan. 1922; letter from Queen Mary to Lord Stamfordham, undated.

concerned.’ Douglas agreed with Queen Mary that the Greek service ‘might very well take place in Buckingham Palace’s Chapel, or indeed anywhere in Buckingham Palace, before a small concourse of immediate relatives.’ His reasoning was rooted in a concern for the monarchy’s dignity as a national symbol and for the reverence of the Anglican marriage service:

Douglas’s objection to the idea of a joint ceremony in Westminster Abbey is based upon the belief that it would tend to make the whole thing look ridiculous in the eyes of the Congregation and the public. At a Greek Orthodox Marriage Service the Bride and Bridegroom have to do things which in the eyes of the ordinary Britisher would appear somewhat ridiculous, e.g. wear a sort of crown, carry a candle, drink a glass of wine, walk round a table and so on. Poor Prince George would, I think, have the strongest objections to doing these things in the presence of the whole assembled aristocracy of the county. The whole thing would border on the ridiculous.⁹⁴

Douglas’s belief that the public would find Greek marital rituals ‘ridiculous’ and his sensitivity to the opinion of the ‘ordinary Britisher’ reflected a deeper concern within elite circles regarding the need to appeal to the ‘people’ as a specific social formation.⁹⁵ Historians have argued that national life was partly centred on an ‘undemonstrative’ Protestantism in this period.⁹⁶ This is substantiated in the way Douglas’s idea – that British customs were incompatible with ostentatious Greek religious practices – persuaded the archbishop that the Orthodox ceremony was best kept hidden from public view. In conversation with the king at Balmoral, Lang presented the case against a joint service by delicately stressing that ‘it would lengthen the proceedings greatly’ and that the ‘Orthodox ceremonies were much too elaborate for a service in the Abbey.’⁹⁷ The queen’s original idea was thus adopted: it was agreed that the Greek service would take place in the private chapel at Buckingham Palace straight after the abbey ceremony and it would ‘only be attended by the respective families, their suites, and any other persons specially invited.’⁹⁸ In this way, Lang carefully helped arrange a wedding which he thought would appeal to the British public’s sensibilities.

The other important matter raised at the meeting of the British and Greek royals was whether the king would permit the BBC to broadcast the wedding ceremony from Westminster Abbey. On learning about the Balmoral family gathering, the controller of programmes at the BBC, Colonel Alan Dawnay, had written to Prince George’s comptroller, Major Ulick Alexander, to propose the idea. Although historians have judged Dawnay’s abilities as the second-in-command at the BBC (under Sir

⁹⁴ LPL/Lang/129/ff.314-19 – Letter from A. C. Don to C. G. Lang, 17 Sep. 1934.

⁹⁵ Houlbrook, *Prince of Tricksters*, p.227.

⁹⁶ M. Grimley, ‘The Religion of Englishness: Puritanism, Providentialism, and “National Character”, 1918-1945’, *Journal of British Studies*, xlii (2007), p.885; J. Wolfe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945* (London, 1994), pp.5-19.

⁹⁷ LPL/Lang/129/ff.320-24.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

John Reith) unfavourably, his war record and patrician connections meant that he was the perfect go-between to communicate with a royal household which largely comprised of other ex-military men.⁹⁹ Addressing Alexander as 'my dear Ulick' (the two were clearly old friends), Dawnay explained that the BBC desired to broadcast the wedding service remarking that it would 'naturally be an occasion of intense interest to listeners everywhere':

As I understand that you are going to Balmoral next week, I should be very grateful if you would discuss the matter with Wigram while you are there, and if he agrees, perhaps you could ascertain His Majesty's wishes and those of Prince George... I am sure you will agree that it would be an excellent and a stirring thing to bring the ceremony, as it were, to the homes of people not only in this country but throughout the Empire.¹⁰⁰

Dawnay's letter suggests that he viewed the monarchy as a symbol which had the potential to unite the nation and empire in these years. His approach was characteristic of a BBC which sought greater access to royal family events in order to elevate the monarchy's unifying role while simultaneously cementing its own credentials as an esteemed and internationally significant media institution.¹⁰¹

The king and Wigram seem to have understood the importance of the crown's unifying role too. Alexander was able to reply to Dawnay that he had 'brought up the question about Prince George's wedding service being broadcast' and 'there is not likely to be any objection, provided you have already obtained the permission of the Dean of Westminster to do this.'¹⁰² Approval from the abbey authorities was, however, slow to arrive. By the time Dawnay wrote to Alexander again to explain that the church had agreed to the broadcast and that the BBC would now like *official* royal consent so that it could begin its preparations, newspapers had got wind of the preliminary plans and revealed that radio listeners would be able to join in the wedding ceremony from their homes.¹⁰³ Dawnay included a postscript in his letter noting his regret that the press had made a 'premature announcement to the effect that the ceremony will be broadcast. I can assure you that the leak has not come from here.'¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately for Dawnay, the leak *had* come from the BBC. In what was almost certainly a reflection of his managerial incompetence as controller of programmes, Dawnay had earlier instructed his Director of Outside Broadcasts, Gerald Cock, to let the *Daily Mail's* columnist, Collie Knox, have

⁹⁹ A. Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, II: *The Golden Age of Wireless* (2nd edn., Oxford, 1995), p.411; Houlbrook, *Prince of Tricksters*, pp.226-7.

¹⁰⁰ BBCWA/R34/862/1 – Letter from A. Dawnay to U. Alexander, 14 Sep. 1934.

¹⁰¹ Hajkowski, *The BBC*, pp.83-92; S. Potter, *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922-1970* (Oxford, 2012), pp.59-64.

¹⁰² BBCWA/R34/862/1 – Letter from U. Alexander to A. Dawnay, 24 Sep. 1934.

¹⁰³ *Daily Mail*, 10 Oct. 1934, p.11.

¹⁰⁴ BBCWA/R34/862/1 – Letter from A. Dawnay to U. Alexander, 10 Oct. 1934.

the scoop on the BBC's wedding preparations as soon as permission to broadcast had been acquired from the abbey.¹⁰⁵

The palace and abbey authorities expressed disappointment with the BBC's indiscretion and Cock had to work hard to dispel their concerns and regain their trust.¹⁰⁶ On the one hand, this episode revealed how the organisers of the wedding had to fight to control its planning against the pressures exerted on them by reporters hungry for disclosure. Equally, though, this chain of events showed how the communications channels which linked the BBC to the royal household were complicated by elite codes of etiquette, with the broadcaster negotiating court protocol in its efforts to bring royalty closer to the public.

Luckily for the BBC, George V ultimately gave his official consent to the wedding broadcast 'provided that the mechanical arrangements in connection with [the] ceremony do not obtrude on the vision.'¹⁰⁷ This message, written by the king's assistant private secretary, Sir Frank Mitchell, to the Lord Chamberlain of the royal household, again revealed a monarch who was anxious to maintain the reverence of the service. The message was relayed to Sir Edward Knapp-Fisher, the Receiver General of Westminster Abbey.¹⁰⁸ These three men were intimately involved in maintaining the dignity of the mediated wedding ceremony. Gerald Cock had to assure Knapp-Fisher that the BBC did not want to broadcast a commentary over the wedding service but rather that commentator Howard Marshall would describe to listeners 'scenes outside the Abbey'. Cock also stressed that the BBC's technical plans would enable 'a perfect reproduction of the entire service' and that no equipment would 'be visible to those in the Abbey, with the single exception of a fine wire and one microphone.'¹⁰⁹ Knapp-Fisher and the Lord Chamberlain were happy with these arrangements, and it seems the microphone placement in the abbey had the desired impact.¹¹⁰ Writing to Cock after the wedding ceremony, the *Sunday Dispatch*'s radio correspondent J. G. Reekie told him how 'I listened in from my sick bed and was amazed. I don't know where the "mikes" were placed, but you certainly found the right places for

¹⁰⁵ BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – BBC Internal Circulating Memo from G. Cock to A. Dawnay, 10 Oct. 1934.

¹⁰⁶ BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Undated letter from H. Marshall to G. Cock and reply 12 Oct. 1934; BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Letter from G. Cock to E. Knapp-Fisher, 12 Oct. 1934; RA/LC/LCO/SPECIAL: Wedding 1934 File 14 – Memo from the Lord Chamberlain to F. Mitchell, 16 Oct. 1934.

¹⁰⁷ RA/LC/LCO/SPECIAL: Wedding 1934 File 14 – Memo from F. Mitchell to the Lord Chamberlain, 17 Oct. 1934.

¹⁰⁸ WAL/WAM/OC/2/3 – 'Broadcasting and Filming' – Letter from the Lord Chamberlain to E. Knapp-Fisher, 18 Oct. 1934.

¹⁰⁹ BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Letter from G. Cock to E. Knapp-Fisher, 13 Oct. 1934. N.B. Cock's emphasis.

¹¹⁰ WAL/WAM/OC/2/3 – 'Broadcasting and Filming' – Letter from E. Knapp-Fisher to the Lord Chamberlain, 19 Oct. 1934.

them!’¹¹¹

Knapp-Fisher also helped to control the media’s access to the marriage ceremony. As with the royal weddings of the 1920s, courtiers arranged the distribution of press and photography passes to the abbey through the Chairman of the Newspaper Proprietors Association: Lord George Riddell in 1922/23 and Sir Thomas McAra in 1934.¹¹² However, the elite connections which linked the palace and abbey authorities to the offices of *The Times* meant the newspaper received special consideration. Not only did the royal household entrust *The Times* with taking the official photographs of George and Marina’s wedding service but the assistant editor of the paper, Robert Barrington-Ward, was also able to informally ask Knapp-Fisher if he could reserve seats for two of his reporters in the abbey.¹¹³ The Receiver General’s reply revealed the privileges extended to *The Times*:

My dear Robin, the Press arrangements are in the hands of Mr Frank Mitchell of Buckingham Palace, but I should like to say that if a member of your Staff would like a roving commission in the Abbey, he would certainly be at liberty to have it. I need hardly say that Court dress would be essential for the perambulating man.¹¹⁴

The gentlemanly codes of conduct which characterised the men’s relationship meant that Knapp-Fisher could trust *The Times* to maintain discretion and dignity in its coverage of the royal wedding. Indeed, the photographs of George and Marina taken by *The Times* during the service, which were subsequently distributed to other media organisations, followed the respectful, distant style of those taken at the royal weddings of the early 1920s. The couple can be seen stood up the aisle facing Archbishop Lang with their backs to the viewer. By refraining from presenting close-up photographs of their facial expressions, which would inevitably highlight the human emotion of the scenes, these images preserved the sanctity of the pact the couple were making in front of God’s representative.¹¹⁵

The Dean of Westminster, William Foxley Norris, helped Knapp-Fisher regulate media access to the wedding service. As already discussed, courtiers were particularly concerned with controlling the royal family’s visual image, and a newsreel film of the wedding ceremony was out of the question. But this did not prevent newsreel companies making unofficial advances to the abbey authorities

¹¹¹ BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Letter from J. G. Reekie to G. Cock, 5 Dec. 1934.

¹¹² RA/LC/LCO/SPECIAL: Wedding 1922 File 6 – Letter from Lord Riddell to the State Chamberlain, 6 Jan. 1922; RA/LC/LCO/SPECIAL: Wedding 1934 File 14 – Letter from F. Mitchell to T. McAra, 26 Nov. 1934.

¹¹³ RA/LC/LCO/SPECIAL: Wedding 1934 File 14 – Letter from the Lord Chamberlain to F. Mitchell, 18 Oct. 1934; WAL/WAM/OC/2/3 – ‘Press’ – Letter from R. Barrington-Ward to E. Knapp-Fisher, 18 Oct. 1934.

¹¹⁴ WAL/WAM/OC/2/3 – ‘Press’ – Letter from E. Knapp-Fisher to R. Barrington-Ward, 19 Oct. 1934.

¹¹⁵ *The Times*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.22. For reproductions of the photograph in other newspapers, see *Daily Mirror*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.1 and p.26; *Daily Express*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.24.

requesting access to film the marriage service – all of which were subsequently rebuffed by the Dean or Receiver General.¹¹⁶ There was also consternation among palace and abbey officials about the potential recording of the BBC broadcast of the service. For the previous two years, the gramophone company H.M.V. had produced records of the king's Christmas broadcasts. On learning that H.M.V. planned to make a recording of the royal wedding ceremony, Wigram urgently wrote to Foxley Norris asking him if he could stop it.¹¹⁷ While this issue was amicably resolved with H.M.V. withdrawing, *Universal News* recorded the section of the royal wedding broadcast in which George and Marina exchanged their marriage vows and played this audio over still photos of the ceremony in its newsreel coverage of the event, presenting it as the 'biggest scoop for years.'¹¹⁸ This recording contradicted the express wishes of Knapp-Fisher who had earlier rejected applications from other newsreel companies to record the radio transmission, and Foxley Norris wrote to the editor of *Universal News* threatening legal action if he did not oversee the deletion of the offending soundtrack from newsreels which had been distributed to cinemas.¹¹⁹

In this way then the royal household and Church of England worked in tandem to try and ensure that the dignity of the wedding was maintained and not undermined by media organisations that stood to commercially gain from intimate exposure. Although the *Universal News*'s scoop was indicative of an underhanded culture of disclosure, most media organisations proved ready to toe the official line and help popularise a respectful image of a family monarchy as the emotional centre point of British national life. Back at Broadcasting House, Gerald Cock and his team were making arrangements for a wedding broadcast which would communicate the impression that the nation had gathered to celebrate George and Marina's marriage. Earlier on in the summer, Howard Marshall had achieved distinction as one of Britain's most recognisable wireless commentators with his ball-by-ball descriptions of the cricket test match series between England and Australia.¹²⁰ His low, dulcet tones and assured manner betrayed an Oxford university education. Given Marshall's recently-acquired fame and background,

¹¹⁶ WAL/WAM/OC/2/3 – 'Press' – Letter from B. B. Saveall, news editor of *British Movietone News*, to W. Foxley Norris, 27 Sep. 1934, and reply on 10 Oct. 1934; Letter from R. S. Howard, editor of *Gaumont British News*, to E. Knapp-Fisher, 19 Nov. 1934, and reply on 19 Nov. 1934. Also see letter from W. Foxley Norris to E. Knapp-Fisher, 5 Oct. 1934.

¹¹⁷ WAL/WAM/OC/2/3 – 'Broadcasting and Filming' – Letter from C. Wigram to W. Foxley Norris, 19 Nov. 1934.

¹¹⁸ WAL/WAM/OC/2/3 – 'Broadcasting and Filming' – Advert for the *Universal News* newsreel in the *Daily Film Renter*, 1 Dec. 1934.

¹¹⁹ WAL/WAM/OC/2/3 – 'Broadcasting and Filming' – Letter from H. W. Bishop of *Gaumont British News* to E. Knapp-Fisher, 1 Dec. 1934; Letter from W. Foxley Norris to C. R. Snape, editor of *Universal News*, 1 Dec. 1934.

¹²⁰ Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting*, p.112.

he was the perfect choice to voice the royal wedding broadcast.¹²¹ Cock's team recruited him in order to help elevate the tastes of listeners and to enhance the reputation of a broadcasting institution which was distinctly 'middle-class in accent, in the issues it addressed, and in the world it presented.'¹²² Marshall's royal wedding commentary was very notable for the way it addressed listeners as active participants in the celebrations. A good example of this can be discerned in his closing lines after the marriage: 'It has been a great occasion, and now, as *we* take our leave of the Royal couple, I'm sure *you* will all join with *me* in wishing long life and all happiness to the Duke and Duchess of Kent.'¹²³ The words highlighted show how Marshall used an inclusive, personalised rhetoric to encourage his audience to feel as though they were partaking in the event along with those who had gathered in London to celebrate George and Marina's wedding.

Historian Eve Colpus has suggested that the early 1930s were also remarkable for the BBC's experimentation with 'listener identification'. The broadcaster tried to reach out to expanding female and working-class audiences through more 'personal' appeals which focused on 'human interest' and 'confronted the emotions'.¹²⁴ The BBC's coverage of the royal wedding is a good case in point. An internal circulating memo shows that Cock's team wanted to juxtapose Marshall's commentary with its 'privileged' perspective alongside a 'Cockney's impressions from the crowd' as part of an evening bulletin on the royal nuptials.¹²⁵ The memo included that 'this second speaker might be a woman.' The identification of a female, working-class voice from London should again be attributed to the way elite institutions like the monarchy, church, and BBC sought to engage in new ways with what they perceived as 'ordinary' people in these years: Gareth Stedman Jones has noted how the Cockney was transformed by the media into an archetype of national working-class identity in this period.¹²⁶ The idea that this speaker might also be female mirrored how the media sought to tailor its coverage of the royal wedding to the perceived tastes of women. As plans for the broadcast developed, news editor Ralph Murray took special precautions to ensure a suitable candidate provided this novel perspective:

¹²¹ BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Letter from H. Marshall to L. Schuster, 1 Oct. 1934. For an example of Marshall's style see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbKHU8QdeBs>

¹²² S. Nicholas, *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC* (Manchester, 1996), p.13. Also see LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, pp.3 and 179-80.

¹²³ My italics. BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Undated letter from H. Marshall to L. Schuster.

¹²⁴ Colpus, 'The Week's Good Cause', pp.321-24. Also see Andrews, 'Homes Both Sides', pp.606-8.

¹²⁵ BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Internal Circulating Memo from Mr Adam to Mr Coatman, 11 Oct. 1947.

¹²⁶ G. Stedman Jones, 'The "Cockney" and the Nation', in D. Feldman and G. Stedman Jones, eds., *Metropolis: Histories and Representations since 1800* (London, 1989), pp.272-324.

The crowd point of view: Cock has someone called Whittaker Wilson who he says has the right sort of contact with the crowd mentality and might suitably be dispatched into their midst to catch their comments. Or – in the abstract preferably, but practically presenting some difficulty – your solution of getting a Cockney woman in to do it herself. Miss Race could perhaps help us in getting a bright Cockney, as she has an extensive acquaintance with such people.¹²⁷

This passage, which suggested that special care was needed to prepare for contact with working-class people, shows how this kind of interaction was innovative in wanting to reflect the ‘crowd mentality’.

The BBC thus saw the 1934 royal wedding as a suitable moment to explore popular opinion in order to enhance the vision of a nation united around the crown. This early example of a vox pop interview sought to shed light on popular opinion and anticipated Mass-Observation’s ethnographic intervention into national life at George VI’s coronation in 1937. Hence royal events can be seen as having exerted a democratising influence on British society by stimulating explorations of wider public attitudes.¹²⁸

The BBC also worked to generate an image of the British nation gathered around the focal point of the wedding through its technical arrangements for the wedding broadcast. BBC editorial policy for the programme specified that listeners should be able to appreciate ‘crowd noises and general effects’ with the engineer fading up the peal of the abbey bells and the sounds made by spectators in order to help immerse those listening as events unfolded.¹²⁹ Indeed, one of the very few complaints levelled at the BBC by some listeners after the wedding was that Marshall’s commentary had at times been ‘too continuous to allow crowd effects etc. to stir the imagination (sic).’¹³⁰ This suggests that the audience wanted to engage vicariously in the event and expected to hear sounds that would help achieve this effect. Newsreel film editors similarly understood the importance of crowd noises to the experience of their viewers and amplified the noise of cheering which attended scenes along the procession route and outside Buckingham Palace in order to achieve symbolic auditory exaltation of the royals.¹³¹

The British media’s emphasis on the crowds which assembled in London for the royal wedding had a deeper significance in the troubled context of the early 1930s. Before the event, news headlines

¹²⁷ BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Memo from Ralph Murray to the News Editor, 25 Oct. 1934.

¹²⁸ J. Moran, ‘Vox Populi?: The Recorded Voice and Twentieth-Century British History’, *Twentieth-Century British History*, xxv (2014), pp.463-5. Also see Mass-Observation, *May the Twelfth*.

¹²⁹ BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Confidential: ‘Royal Wedding – 29 Nov. 1934’.

¹³⁰ BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Anonymous handwritten memorandum: ‘Royal Wedding November 29th 1934 – Criticism of Howard Marshall – Compiled from Listeners Letters’. N.B. Unfortunately none of the letters which criticised Marshall have survived. However, there are suggestions in correspondence that has survived that the vast majority of letters received from listeners praised both the BBC and the commentator for their handling of the royal wedding broadcast. E.g. Letter from Sir John Reith to Howard Marshall, 11 Dec. 1934.

¹³¹ *Pathé Super Sound Gazette*, ‘The Royal Wedding’, 29 Nov. 1934; *British Paramount News*, ‘The Duke of Kent Weds Princess Marina’, 3 Dec. 1934.

reported that one million people were expected to travel to the capital from the provinces and Celtic fringes aboard specially chartered overnight rail services, boosting the transport industry and injecting £15,000,000 into the tourism and hospitality sectors.¹³² The *Daily Express* presented the wedding as a more direct stimulus for trade, describing how ‘hundreds will marry on November 29th’ (the same day as the royal couple) as part of a ‘love boom week’.¹³³ While the most damaging effects of the interwar economic crisis had passed by late 1934, the media clearly envisioned the royal wedding as having a positive effect on the nation’s finances in the way it brought people together from the furthest corners of Britain. The message that the ‘great invasion’ of London for the wedding strengthened national ties was made even more explicitly by newspapers which claimed that the event witnessed the temporary easing of social enmities. Reports focused on the good-natured crowds and how people of different backgrounds had gathered together on the procession route the night before wedding day:

We stood there, an anxious crowd – some of us had been standing there all night – to watch the Royal Wedding. There were nearly a million of us there, and we came from all sorts and conditions of people. We were very rich, and we were very poor. We had many different political views. We did not see eye to eye by any means. But we all stood shoulder to shoulder from four to 20 deep along the kerb of the Royal route. It was a crowd now greater than any that has collected since the Armistice, and we were there to see a bride who, as the Primate so aptly put it, the British people had taken into their hearts.¹³⁴

Likening the mood on the procession route to the public response to the Armistice in 1918, the writer, Geraint Goodwin, described a unique moment of cohesion which, he suggested, eased social tensions. The same sentiment can be detected in newspaper reports which presented the wedding as ‘the day that made the nation happier’, and as a ‘public event not, for once, depressing – as so much “news” is in these troubled times’.¹³⁵

The media reproduced the image of a British people united around the monarchy through the dissemination of large photographs of the London crowds. While this was not a new phenomenon, the pictures evoked a vision of a multitude of loyal subjects which had gathered to revere royalty.¹³⁶ What was new, though, was the way the royal household permitted photographers and cameramen access to

¹³² *Sunday Pictorial*, 25 Nov. 1934, p.1; *Daily Express*, 26 Nov. 1934, p.3.

¹³³ *Daily Express*, 3 Nov. 1934, p.3.

¹³⁴ *Daily Sketch*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.2.

¹³⁵ *News of the World*, 2 Dec. 1934, p.12; *Daily Mirror*, 17 Sep. 1934, p.11. Also see the cartoon ‘Further Back, There!’ in the *Daily Express*, 29 Nov. 1934, p.17.

¹³⁶ On the nineteenth-century popularisation of crowd-centred imagery, see Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, pp.17, 43, and 60-67.

Buckingham Palace's roof, enabling them to capture vast panoramas of the crowds below.¹³⁷ Tens of thousands of faces could be seen in these images, with the geometric layout of the Mall and Victoria Memorial helping to convey the orderly nature of the assembled masses. Newspapers and newsreels juxtaposed these images with scenes of the royal family stood on the balcony, the bride and groom waving to the crowds.¹³⁸ This juxtaposition was particularly stark in the *Daily Sketch* which pictured Marina waving – the handkerchief she held aloft imperfectly photographed as a blur to emphasise her special gestural rapport with the public (Fig. 3). In this way, the media worked with courtiers to create images of a loyal citizenry united around the family monarchy, enhancing the interwar narrative of the 'peaceable', well-ordered British public sphere.¹³⁹

[INSERT FIG.3 HERE]

Cosmo Lang also promoted an image of a people united in their emotional connections to the House of Windsor in his royal wedding address, delivered to those who had gathered in Westminster Abbey and to radio listeners across Britain and the world:

Never in history, we may dare to say, has a marriage been attended by so vast a company of witnesses. For by a new and marvellous invention of science countless multitudes in every variety of place and home are joining in this Service. The whole Nation – nay, the whole Empire – are the wedding guests; and more than guests, members of the family. For this great assembly in the Abbey, the crowds waiting outside its walls, and the multitude of listening people, regard the family of our beloved King and Queen as in a true sense their own.¹⁴⁰

In his opening sentences, Lang reinvigorated the idea of a national family monarchy – first proposed by Bagehot almost seventy years before – modernising the imagery of a nation joined together around the House of Windsor by stressing how new mass communications technologies had enabled listeners to join in, and empathise with, a royal wedding. Lang encouraged his listeners to internalise the idea that the royal family were at the centre of British society and that they symbolised a Christian model

¹³⁷ RA/PS/PSO/GV/PS/MAIN/55340: 'Press and Photography' – Letter from F. Mitchell to the Deputy Master of the Household, 8 Nov. 1934.

¹³⁸ For these kinds of juxtapositions see *British Movietone News*, 'The Royal Wedding', 29 Nov. 1934; *British Paramount News*, 'The Duke of Kent Weds Princess Marina', 3 Dec. 1934; *Daily Sketch*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.25; *Daily Mirror*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.16.

¹³⁹ Lawrence, *Electing Our Masters*, pp.120-7. For comparable examples in a Japanese context, see T. Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (London, 1996), pp.226-8.

¹⁴⁰ LPL/Lang/191/ff.157-9 – Draft of royal wedding address. Also see *The Church Times*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.598.

of domesticity with which the nation identified. He therefore helped to recalibrate British citizenship through a language which stressed personal devotion to the family monarchy.

III

Writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury two days after the wedding, George V recorded his pleasure at the way the event had been popularly received:

I shall never forget that beautiful service in the Abbey, so simple and yet so dignified... Then the enormous crowds in the streets and especially the one outside this Palace, who showed their love and appreciation for us and our family, by their enthusiasm impressed us more than I can say and we deeply appreciated it (sic). I must thank you for all that you did in arranging and carrying out the two Services, which we drew up more or less at Balmoral... The Prime Minister and Jim Thomas both came up to me after the breakfast and said, this is a great day for England! If only the politicians would give up their party quarrels and would rally round and support the National Government, what could one not do in this country. We have done our best, it is now for the country to do the same.¹⁴¹

While this letter reveals the confidence the king had in Ramsay MacDonald's National Government, it also suggests that the royal wedding had been staged in order to help alleviate some of the social and political strains which characterised British public life in late 1934. George V thanked his archbishop for his help in arranging the wedding, emphasised how they had 'done [their] best' to bring the nation together, and stated how pleased he was with the dignity and simplicity of the abbey ceremony. Social elites and ordinary members of the public shared the king's sentiment that the wedding had helped to unite Britain. Lang noted that he received many letters congratulating him on his role in the wedding, and some of the correspondence he kept revealed how different sections of society had come together to celebrate the marriage.¹⁴² Lord Charles Wyndham described how he listened to the broadcast from 'an island in Parliament Square', that he had 'heard perfectly', and that 'every word was followed most reverently by the vast crowd.' He stated that the 'climax' was Lang's address, which had met with awe – 'you could have heard a pin drop' – and he remarked that when the archbishop finished 'nobody said anything for a moment and then I heard three or 4 young artisan or clerk sort of men behind me agreeing that it was "very nice – very nice indeed (sic)."' ¹⁴³ Wyndham's letter implied that the different classes of people who gathered in central London to hear the broadcast over loudspeaker systems were all captivated by the ceremony and, in particular, Lang's address.

¹⁴¹ LPL/Lang/318/ff.21-22 – Letter from King George V to C. G. Lang, 1 Dec. 1934. N.B. The king's emphasis.

¹⁴² LPL/Lang/191/ff.172 – Lang: note to self, 4 Dec. 1934.

¹⁴³ LPL/Lang/191/ff.162-162v – Letter from C. Wyndham to C. G. Lang, 29 Aug. 1934.

Elma Paget, the daughter of Conservative politician Sir Samuel Hoare, similarly wrote to Lang to share with him some of the comments made by her lodgers on hearing the royal wedding broadcast:

‘Lovely wasn’t it and the Archbishop – wasn’t he splendid, if I could have run and thanked him I’d have run miles.’ ‘And that oration – well I can’t use no other word, so grand and so homely.’ And a third ‘I can’t speak about it now even ’cos I’m easy touched and his words made me cry.’ And the last ‘Every word lovely but I could hardly listen for the lump in my throat so I turned it on again in the evening when they give use the record and the lump came just as bad as ever (sic).’¹⁴⁴

If Paget’s words are interpreted literally then it would seem that the broadcast had a strong emotional impact on media audiences as they listened to the wedding. Lang appears to have risen to the occasion by combining the ‘grand’ with the ‘homely’ in his address on the family monarchy. Indeed, this idea was echoed in a letter written to Lang by Sir Samuel Hoare himself. He had been present in the abbey alongside Viscount Hailsham and both men agreed that ‘it could not have been better. You held the balance so well between the ceremonial and the intimate.’¹⁴⁵ Thus, the archbishop’s expert command of his audiences’ feelings, both in Westminster and across the airwaves, evoked powerful responses from his listeners as they empathised with the ‘ordinary’ family story at the heart of the occasion.

This blending of the intimate with the dignified was a theme noted by radio listeners who wrote to Gerald Cock in order to congratulate the BBC. W. V. Towlett from Kent suggested that ‘the pomp and splendour of the occasion, the perfect choral accompaniment and the beautiful simplicity of the Archbishop’s address must have made a deep impression on many homes and recalled the ‘beautiful’ side of life which is all too rare.’¹⁴⁶ E. G. from Ilford, Essex, used similar language in extending Cock their ‘heartiest congratulations on effecting a most magnificent broadcast. The simple beauty of the service was enhanced thereby.’¹⁴⁷ Meanwhile, Annie Maudsley from Southport was among several writers who emphasised the lucidity with which the service was broadcast. She explained that she had listened in on her portable ‘Pye’ wireless set and that ‘the wedding service came through perfectly. Every word distinct. I don’t think I should have heard so well had I been in the Abbey itself... it was just wonderful and would give millions of people the greatest pleasure.’¹⁴⁸ The clarity with which the service was transmitted by radio thus enabled an intimate, immersive audience experience as captured

¹⁴⁴ LPL/Lang/191/ff.171 – Letter from E. K. Paget to C. G. Lang, 4 Dec. 1934. N.B. The BBC repeated its recording of the royal wedding broadcast on the evening of 29 Nov. 1934.

¹⁴⁵ LPL/Lang/191/ff.164 – Letter from S. Hoare to C. G. Lang, 30 Nov. 1934.

¹⁴⁶ BBCWA/R30/3/644/1 – Letter from W. V. Towlett to G. Cock, 30 Nov. 1934.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid – Undated letter from E. G. to G. Cock.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid – Letter from A. M. Maudsley to G. Cock, 2 Dec. 1934. N.B. Also see letters from W. H. Parr (2 Dec. 1934) and J. L. Abraham (1 Dec. 1934) to G. Cock.

in words like ‘beautiful’, ‘deep’, and in the phrase of another listener from Bristol that ‘every word of the Bride’s and Groom’s responses was perfectly audible.’¹⁴⁹

The broadcast of the royal wedding also generated temporal concurrence – the sharing of time amongst a people – which worked to imaginatively unite listeners as part of a national community.¹⁵⁰ Letter writers conveyed this sense of participation in their descriptions of the ‘millions of people’ and ‘many homes’ that joined in with the wedding. The broadcast thus seems to have enhanced ‘affective integration’ around the focal point of the monarchy, with members of the public expressing intense emotional identification with the royal family and with a national collective as they participated in the wedding together. The language of an imagined collective who joined around the wedding broadcast also manifested in letters written by ordinary people to George and Marina themselves. Addressing the princess after the event, ex-serviceman Arthur Thompson from Westcliffe-on-Sea intimated how the broadcast had a socially unifying effect on British people, bringing them together through a shared emotional identification with the lovers:

I am sure you will not think me rude in writing you like this but I was so impressed when listening to your wedding on the wireless that I simply had to express my feelings. I am simply one of millions of my countrymen who joined in welcoming and wishing you wishes which came not only by cheering but from the Heart.¹⁵¹

Thompson articulated a strong empathy which, he emphasised, linked him intimately from his heart to the princess, and he believed that he shared this feeling with his fellow Britons. Seventy-nine-year-old Reverend William Waldren from Lingfield, Surrey, expressed similar sentiments in his letter to the prince: ‘We were all brightened and cheered in hearing the lovely Service by wireless from the Abbey and full of good hopes and joy for your sake – no Service I can remember seemed so exactly what it should be as this one; it was in the truest sense Divine.’¹⁵² Waldren described his experience of the royal wedding in terms of its uplifting spiritual appeal but also remarked on how the BBC’s broadcast had evoked in him and those with whom he listened feelings of hope and joy for George and Marina.

The press loudly championed the idea that the broadcast had brought media audiences together. Headlines echoed Lang’s address, proclaiming it the ‘Listener’s Wedding’ and the ‘Wedding Service

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, p.28. Also see B. Anderson *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London, 1983).

¹⁵¹ RA/GDKH/WED/C – Letter from A. R. Thompson to Princess Marina, 5 Dec. 1934.

¹⁵² RA/GDKH/WED/C – Letter from W. Waldren to Prince George, 7 Dec. 1934.

All the World Attended'.¹⁵³ As already discussed, the reports that followed presented the monarchy as the special symbol which united Britain at a time of national and international instability. A number of letters written by readers to the press after the wedding drew notable attention to the international situation in explaining the event. In the weeks leading up to the marriage, newspapers were not only overwhelmed by stories on royal wedding minutiae, but also by articles on the growing unrest which characterised European politics. Along with the assassination of the King of Yugoslavia, journalists were particularly exercised by German re-armament and the threat Hitler's dictatorship represented to the continent's fragile peace.¹⁵⁴ It seems the chasm that separated Britain's joyful mood as it prepared for George and Marina's wedding and Europe's tumultuous politics in late 1934 helped to crystallise an image of a British people uniquely united through their strong emotional connections to monarchy. A letter from J. C. Fullton of London was printed by the *Daily Mirror* in its readers' correspondence section under the title 'Hailing the Throne' the day after the royal nuptials: 'This week thousands have seen the nation "hailing" our Royal Family. What a blessing that we have a Throne to salute, instead of being obliged to "hail" some humbugging dictator!'¹⁵⁵ This positive appraisal of the monarchy contrasted its national symbolic importance with that of dictatorship at a time when Hitler was making disingenuous claims about building a 'peace army'.¹⁵⁶ The next day there followed a plethora of other letters from readers in London on monarchy. P. F. Ryley stated that 'the great advantage of monarchy to any country is that the throne stands above Party. No newly raised-up Dictator, however able, can possibly command the respect due to Kingship.' Ryley then opined that 'in this century we may well see a revival of monarchy, which appeared to be dying, even in England, at the end of the eighteenth century' – suggesting that the royal wedding had helped revitalise the royal family's popular appeal. Meanwhile, 'S. T.' pithily described two opposing political systems: 'a dictatorship obviously doesn't go with a monarchy. If proof is wanted – look at the Dictator-run countries of Europe to-day.'¹⁵⁷ The historian Jonathan Parry has argued that the crown's symbolisation of political freedom and neutrality

¹⁵³ *Manchester Guardian*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.13; *News Chronicle*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.1; *Daily Mirror*, 30 Nov. 1934, pp.1 and 7.

¹⁵⁴ *News Chronicle*, 28 Nov. 1934, p.1; *Daily Express*, 28 Nov. 1934, p.1; *Daily Mirror*, 10 Oct. 1934, p.12; *The Times*, 10 Oct. 1934, p.16.

¹⁵⁵ *Daily Mirror*, 30 Nov. 1934, p.13.

¹⁵⁶ *Daily Express*, 29 Nov. 1934, p.10.

¹⁵⁷ *Daily Mirror*, 1 Dec. 1934, p.11.

contrasted with the ‘vulgarity of fascism’ in this period.¹⁵⁸ Equally, it seems from letters written to newspapers and the stage-managers of the 1934 royal wedding that mass mediated royal events like George and Marina’s romance and marriage had the effect of emphasising the integrative, stabilising role that the monarchy had on British national life – and that this contrasted vividly with the political uncertainty that reigned in Europe.

IV

George and Marina’s royal wedding had important consequences beyond 1934. Most significantly, their romance helped to shape official and popular responses to the public announcement in December 1936 that Edward VIII wanted to marry the American socialite Wallis Simpson. It was unthinkable to the clergy and particularly Cosmo Lang, who had stressed the indissoluble nature of marriage to those who had tuned in to listen to George and Marina’s wedding ceremony only two years earlier, that the King of Great Britain and the Empire, and Supreme Governor of the Church of England, should wish to marry a woman who was twice divorced. This view was generally shared by Britain’s political and media elite and, together with the archbishop, they managed to convince the king that his regal status was compromised by his choice of wife.¹⁵⁹

Under George V, the monarchy had increasingly adhered to Bagehot’s idea that the royal family should act as ‘the head of our *morality*’.¹⁶⁰ The 1934 royal wedding was the most spectacular episode in a series of events that highlighted the domesticity and Christian fidelity of the House of Windsor. With the help of a forward-thinking BBC and that more traditional organ of societal authority, the church, the royal household carefully orchestrated George and Marina’s marriage to enhance the national appeal of the family monarchy among media audiences, while maintaining the dignity of the crown. Edward VIII’s decision to marry Simpson scandalised the establishment precisely because it threatened the domestic ideal that royalty had publicly elevated in the years preceding his short reign: the moral template for monarchy diligently promoted at the time of George and Marina’s romance was endangered by Edward’s transgression. However, the king’s abdication and the succession of his

¹⁵⁸ J. Parry, ‘Whig Monarchy, Whig Nation: Crown Politics and Representativeness, 1800–2000’, in A. Olechnowicz, ed., *The Monarchy and the British Nation, 1780 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.55–6. Also see Cannadine, ‘The Context’, pp.148–9.

¹⁵⁹ Beaken, *Cosmo Lang*, pp.86–142; M. Aitken, *The Abdication of King Edward VIII* (London, 1966), pp.95–105; P. Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin: Conservative Leadership and National Values* (Cambridge, 1999), pp.326–9; J. Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times* (London, 1955), pp.336–57.

¹⁶⁰ Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, p.79. Again, Bagehot’s italics.

younger brother as George VI ultimately reinforced the moral principles that the House of Windsor championed in the 1930s, with the new monarch's moral probity and happy family life echoing that of his father and contrasting with his older brother's decadent, irreligious, and childless public image.¹⁶¹

Notably, letters written to Edward VIII by his subjects at the time of the abdication crisis reveal how George and Marina's romance had another lasting effect on public life. More than ever before, their relationship was celebrated as a love match. The couple had worked in tandem with the British media to publicise a story that drew attention to their happiness and which resonated with the new emotional cultures of personal fulfilment and compatibility. Historians have shown how many of the letters Edward VIII received in December 1936 that encouraged him to follow his heart and marry the woman he loved revealed their authors' strong identification with the kind of modern romance that was personified by George and Marina in 1934.¹⁶² Female letter writers were particularly drawn to this embryonic form of 'companionate love' with its emphasis on emotional satisfaction, and it seems likely that the female-targeted media coverage of George and Marina's romance strengthened some British women's imaginative investment in royal love stories. We might therefore interpret the 1934 royal romance as double-edged in its significance. On the one hand, the family monarchy assumed a truly national presence and established a virtuous domestic model for later generations of royalty to follow. On the other hand, the growing emphasis on personal fulfilment rendered the family-centred formula untenable when individual royals decided to pursue love outside the confines of Christian marriage – as with Edward VIII and later on with Princess Margaret in the 1950s and Prince Charles in the 1980s.

The 1934 royal romance had a wider political significance as well. I have shown here how the public was enabled through new mass media to empathise with royalty in powerful ways, and that in the context of the 1930s – with the re-emergence of nationalistic politics abroad and the persistence of socio-economic disorder at home – the imagery of a British people united around the monarchy left an indelible impression on many who tuned into listen to the royal wedding. Marina, in particular, was responsible for pioneering a modern and more direct mediated relationship between royalty and the public, and I have suggested that she was motivated by a personal concern to distance herself from her

¹⁶¹ Mort, 'Love in a Cold Climate', p.61; B. Baxter, *Destiny Called to Them* (Oxford, 1939), pp.8-12.

¹⁶² S. Williams, *The People's King: The True Story of the Abdication* (London, 2003); p.xix; Mort, 'Love in a Cold Climate', p.46, and on women who wrote to Edward VIII see pp.39-51.

past as an exiled Greek royal and a shrewd understanding of how elite institutions could democratise their public images. I have interpreted the emphasis that Marina and her inner-circle placed on her desire to marry for love as part of a wider effort to downplay her foreign past and its association with the pre-1914 tradition of dynastic intermarriage while simultaneously playing up modern romantic enrichment. However, the European backdrop from which the Greek princess suddenly sprung in the summer of 1934 is deserving of further historical analysis.

While I have argued that the orchestrators of the royal wedding promoted its British character and that this resonated with members of the public, some of whom wrote to the press describing how the event had strengthened their belief in the nation's constitutional system, favourably contrasting it with continental authoritarianism, the fact that it was attended by the largest concourse of European crowned heads of state seen since George V's coronation in 1911 suggests that 1934 witnessed a very public rejuvenation of the 'royal cosmopolitanism' that Johannes Paulmann suggests ended with the First World War.¹⁶³ The idea that the House of Windsor's survival instinct caused it to distance itself from other royal houses after 1917 is often repeated, but the 1934 royal wedding and the care and trouble George VI later took with the exiled monarchs of northern Europe and the Balkans during the Second World War suggests that we should not exaggerate the British monarchy's insularity in this period.¹⁶⁴ Additional research needs to investigate these themes and examine whether the House of Windsor's continued commitment to an extended royal cousinhood formed part of an attempt to forge an alternative international order – connected through constitutional crowned heads of state – to rival the one that was fast developing around fascism. Whilst it is clear that the British monarchy sought to shore up its popularity in both a national and imperial context through an increased emphasis on royal family life between the wars, deeper analysis of the crown's continued ties to the old continental order would enhance our understanding of a complex period when international relations were undergoing rapid transformation that altered the way the British saw themselves and their place in the world.

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¹⁶³ J. Paulmann, 'Searching for a 'Royal International': The Mechanics of Monarchical Relations in Nineteenth-Century Europe', in M. Geyer and J. Paulmann, eds., *The Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War* (Oxford, 2001), p.176; *News of the World*, 25 Nov. 1934, p.1; *Sunday Pictorial*, 25 Nov. 1934, p.3; *Daily Telegraph*, 26 Nov. 1934, p.14 and 27 Nov. 1934, p.16.

¹⁶⁴ S. Bradford, *George VI* (3rd edn., London, 2011), pp.488-94.